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or that because we are Nupe'—is quoted in support of widely different and divergent cultural activities. In the riverain districts they tell you: 'The Nupe know only two funeral rites, the ceremony of the Eight Days and the ceremony of the Forty Days; but the Mohammedans have introduced a third ritual, the Hundred-and-twenty Days.' Go to the Nupe round Bida or in Trans-Kaduna, and you learn 'that all Nupe perform the Hundred-and-twenty Days'. In Bida they say that 'no Nupe eats eggs, for they make the women sterile'—but in other districts I have seen people eat eggs and think nothing of it. A contradiction?—only so far as concepts which are never checked against reality can imply contradiction.

I have said already that for certain cultural practices the people admit that no general rule can be formulated and that different sections of Nupe follow different practices. But this admission of differentiation is, with regard to actual facts, no less inaccurate than the comprehensive statement about customs that are 'typically Nupe'. The cultural theory which allows for variants in the tribal culture is no less a theory and no less an ideology. This qualified ideology of cultural unity becomes specially important in connexion with another fact, namely, that the Nupe theory of tribal or cultural unity does not imply a belief in common stock or origin of all members or sections of the tribe. On the contrary, the Nupe assume different origin, and subsequent processes of fusion and sometimes differentiation, to account for the existing tribal sections. The Nupe count eleven or twelve such tribal sections or, as I propose to call them, sub-tribes. Here are their names: Ebe, Gbedye or Gbedegi, Kusopa, Benu, Beni, Dibo or Žitako (also known as Gana-Gana among the Hausa), Kyedye or Kede, Ebagi, Bataci, Kupa, Cekpā, and perhaps also Gwagba—a section formed but recently, something between sub-tribe and political faction. One group in Trans-Kaduna, which is believed to represent the oldest section of Nupe, has no second sub-tribal name; the people refer to themselves only as Nupe, or Nupe *zam*, 'pure Nupe'. In this area no real conception of the sub-tribe exists; the different villages regard themselves as independent cultural units, of independent origin, united only by the one, widest link of tribal membership.

The different sub-tribes are supposed to be not only of different origin but also of different age and to have evolved as sub-tribes at different periods. According to Nupe tradition there were five 'original' sub-tribes in existence at the time of the culture-hero of Nupe, Tsoede, of whom we shall hear more presently, namely the Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, Bataci, and Dibo. The origin of the Kyedye and Gbedegi is linked, in this tradition, with the coming of Tsoede. The riverain Kyedye are supposed to have come with him to Nupe country and to have been settled by him all along the river Niger and established as the Lords of the Water and as local rulers over the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, the marsh-dwelling Bataci. The Gbedegi are believed to have been of Yoruba origin, and to have been Nupe-ized by Tsoede and his men. Cekpā and Kupa, the sub-tribes on the southern bank of the Niger, are said to have lived first in the area north of the river, in Nupe proper, but

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619 to have crossed later to the other side where they settled and became, in the course of time, independent sub-tribal sections.[1] In the case of the 173 Kupa the tradition is more concrete; it describes them as Ebe people who have crossed the Kontagora river (called in Nupe Eku, to cross the river *ɔ́ɔ*, in Nupe, *lá 'kú pà*, and this is supposed to be the origin of their tribal name) in the time of the big Nupe wars of conquest, about 1800. The Kusopa, the Forest Tenders, appear in Nupe tradition out of nothing. Somehow they grew into a separate sub-tribe the identity of which is based on their habitat in the thick inland forest west of the Kaduna and also on their special occupation, which is the cultivation of kola-nut trees. Gwagba is a deprecatory nickname given originally to a small section of 'Nupe *zam*' from Gbara, followers and henchmen of the Nupe kings who, in the wars for the Nupe throne, fled to Zuguma. *Gwagba* means, literally, Those who threw up their Hands, the Defeated, but it is applied to-day to the whole group of Nupe living in and around Zuguma town. The Benu, finally, represent another sub-tribe of recent origin, formed in historical times. They are people of Bornu origin (*Benu* being the Nupe corruption of *Bornu*), from Kukawa, the ancient capital of Bornu, who came to Nupe country towards the end of the eighteenth century, at the time of *Etsu* Ma'azū and settled, with his permission, in Trans-Kaduna. They came as wealthy traders, bringing with them certain new agricultural techniques—onion growing—horses and cattle (the latter soon disappeared in the tsetse-infested country). They soon became the dominant group, economically as well as politically, in the region where they settled, but they Nupe-ized themselves, intermarried with the Nupe, forgot their language, and abandoned most of their original cultural traits. Thus they are to-day a section of the Nupe, speaking the Nupe language, and conforming in their whole social structure to the standards of Nupe culture. Only their great annual festival, the *gani*, and the title of their chief, *Zonuwa*, are reminiscent of the ancient culture of Bornu.[2]

619 The name Nupe has also been extended to other originally alien groups living in Nupe country, which have become Nupe-ized and are 563 hardly distinguishable to-day from the people among whom they live. In many villages and towns of Nupe we find groups known by the name of *Koni*, Prisoners of War,[3] or Eyagi-Nupe, Yoruba-Nupe, people of Yoruba origin, who are the descendants of slaves captured in the wars of the Fulani kings of Nupe against the Yoruba; they were later freed and, by order of the king, settled in various districts of the kingdom. In Bida town I met the makers of horse-trappings—a craft imported from Hausa—who assured me that they were Hausa no longer. 'Yes, our fathers were Hausa,' they admitted; 'but we are Nupe'—claiming Nupe-

[1] They speak, in fact, the same dialect—proof that the tradition is not without historical foundation.

[2] See Sir Richmond Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p. 148. I have given a more detailed description of this process of cultural fusion in *Man*, 1938, 85.

[3] *Koni* means 'war' in Fulfulde; the adoption of this term reflects cultural conditions in the early times of the Fulani régime, when the rulers still used their own language.

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CHAPTER V

THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGE

621 THE political organization of the Nupe village differs in certain respects in different parts of Nupe-land, but the general outline of the system remains, with one or two exceptions, the same. Every Nupe village, as it constitutes a separate community, also constitutes a separate political system. The area over which its sovereignty extends is formed by the village and its *tunga*, the 'town' and its 'dependencies'. At its head stands the 'town-king', *Žitsu*, who, to use the language of the people, 'owns' the village—*u wũ ži*—and the land on which it stands. By this right of 'possession' he controls the lives of his community and the main resource from which it derives its livelihood, land. The close identification of chief and locality is often expressed in the title which the chief assumes and which is identical with the name of the village: the chief of Jebba (the correct name of which is Gebba) is known as *Gebba*, of Bele as *Belé*, and the old Beni 'town-king' of Bida styled himself *Bida*. In the chief, then, the collective existence of the village community is represented as in a symbol.

621 This political configuration is to some extent thought of as having evolved gradually in the course of time. But the Nupe village (unlike 173 the kingdom) possesses no elaborate mythology which tells of the origin and the growth of the present polity. We have spoken of the vague interpretation in a kinship sense of the past of the village, according to which the people of the village have all descended from some common ancestor. As regards the specific political features, we find equally vague traditions of half-forgotten ancestors who were the founders of a village and the first settlers in the locality (we can disregard here the recent memories of fusion and separation of villages). The following tradition, referring to the village Doko, is a typical instance:

> Two brothers came from beyond the river, from a place called Gaze (a village on the river Kaduna). They came to a place now called Kopa [Kopa is about five miles from Doko, on the other side of the hill on the slope of which Doko is situated]. There was nothing in this place then save buah. They settled there, first as hunters, later they began to work the land. After two years the younger brother left Kopa and came down the hill to the place where Doko is to-day. He settled there and called himself chief. He became the first *Žitsu* of Doko, *Žitsu* Lefiya.

These traditions of origin become more articulate only where the tradition of the village can be linked with the semi-mythical history of Nupe kingdom and its ancestor-hero Tsoede. In a number of Nupe villages the people trace their line of chiefs back to one who was confirmed in his office by Tsoede, and invested by him with certain insignia and magical emblems. Of both Tsoede and these insignia we shall hear more at a later stage. Here it may be said that the ancestral chief thus

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marked off by tradition is not, as a rule, identified with the first chief and founder of the village. It is mostly the second in the line of chiefs whom tradition associates with the ancestor-king of Nupe. Thus Lefiya, the first chief of Doko, is said to have been succeeded by a certain Dibo Saba upon whom Tsoede conferred insignia and chiefly magic. Or in Pichi tradition has it that a certain Dikwa founded the village and assumed chieftainship first, and that it was his successor, Goga, who was invested by Tsoede with the emblems of rulership. This mythological feature is of great significance, for it proclaims, projected in the manner of myths into the dim past, two facts in which we shall discover the very essence of village society: the fact that the village is conceived of as possessing a social identity of its own, and at the same time the fact that it depends for its continuous existence on the sanction of king and kingdom of Nupe.

We notice also another interesting fact, namely, that while normally Nupe families cannot trace their ancestry back more than three or four generations, these chieftain families proudly record a long list of ancestors, embracing ten or more generations. The explanation lies, again, in the political significance of this link with the past which, like the mythology that surrounds it, endorses the existing political constellation. In the case of ordinary kinship groups the genealogy has no significance beyond that of establishing, rather vaguely, present relationships; in the case of (hereditary) chieftainship it is to establish a convincing—and unique—pedigree for political claims.

THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The chief rules over his community assisted by the village elders, the *nūsaźi* or Old Ones, or, as they are also called, the *ticiźi*, the Titled Ones. They are the heads of families or of groups of families which live together in one compound or one *efu*. Their appointment to the position of an elder is expressed in the titles which the chief confers upon these members of his council. The office of the elders is only very loosely specialized. Certain titles reflect the special occupations which *nūsaźi* and their families follow—titles of hunters, drummers, blacksmiths. When the community is in need of the services of these professions—for the purpose of organizing a large-scale hunt or of preparing a ceremony at which the village drummers are to perform—it will secure them through the elders who represent the profession on the village council. Sometimes a religious office is combined with a political rank. But more frequently the important priestly offices, for example the priesthood of the *gunnu*, the main cult of Nupe, although bestowed on family heads, are not connected with a political position. The holder of this religious office has no seat or voice in the village council except when questions of ritual—his ritual—are discussed. Apart from these more specialized offices the rank of the *nūsa* is exactly what the name implies: the rank of a man whose age and experience and the headship over a large family entitle him to assume an active part in guiding the fate of his community.

Titles and composition of the council of elders vary, but the same rule is valid in every Nupe village: so many 'houses' or family groups, so

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121 563 Visualize this intricate racial and cultural pattern: two *élites* of different order—*kintsoźi* and Fulani—and surrounding them, almost in concentric circles, ethnic groups of varying cultural dissimilitude, each cultural grade also a grade on the scale of political evaluation. This is indeed the exact picture of the historical growth of Nupe kingdom. Through conquests and expansion, with fluid, ever-changing boundaries, Nupe kingdom maintained its conspicuous centre, the core of its political and cultural growth. Like a tree, it grew from the centre, and you can still trace the rings which mark its growth.

FOUNDATION OF THE KINGDOM

121 Before embarking on the historical account we must clarify the concept of 'history' as we propose to use it. For there is a certain ambiguity in the term 'history' as it is used by anthropologists. History can mean two things: first, what we may call 'objective' history, that is, the series of events which we, the investigators, describe and establish in accordance with certain 'objective', universal criteria of connexion and sequence. Second, the 'ideological' history, which exists in the society which we study, and which describes and arranges events in accordance with accepted traditions about past happenings and developments. The two may coincide (as they do in modern history); or the second may at least supply some source of information for the first. But also it may have significance only as a sociological datum *per se*, i.e. as a system of accepted beliefs and traditions influencing social behaviour in the group. As such, it is often indistinguishable from mythology and from what Malinowski has called significantly the 'mythical charter' of customs and existing cultural usages.[1] Different societies may stress in a different measure either the mythical, supernatural or the rational, pseudo-scientific nature of what they accept as an account of their past. The Nupe are what we may call an historically-minded people. The highest, constantly invoked authority for things existing is, to the Nupe, the account of things past—but an account which is clothed in terms of a sober, pseudo-scientific 'history'. Such is also the nature of the Nupe tradition of the origin of their kingdom. Only for the more recent periods do we possess 'objective' sources; the earliest period of Nupe kingdom is described only in their own 'ideological history'.

173 The earliest history of Nupe centres round the figure of Tsoede or Edegi,[2] the culture hero and mythical founder of Nupe kingdom. The genealogies of Nupe kings which are preserved in many places in Nupe country, and which have also found their way into the earliest written records of Nupe history which were compiled by Mohammedan scholars

his grievance against a certain little unruly relative of his whom he believed to have intrigued against him. He added: 'All Nupe are bad people, you know.' The said relative, himself, of course, as much Fulani as the *Etsu*, retaliated by informing me that 'all Fulani were liars'.

[1] B. Malinowski, in *Encycl. Soc. Sc.*, London, 1931, vol. iv, p. 640.

[2] Tsoede is, linguistically, a contraction of *Etsu*, or '*tsu Ede*;' the Nupe more often use the name Tsoede, the Hausa the name Edegi.

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and court historians, place his birth in the middle of the fifteenth century.[1] At this time, the tradition runs, there was no kingdom of Nupe, only small chieftainships which, among the Beni, were united in a confederacy under the chief of Nku, a village near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna. At that time the Nupe people were tributary to the *Atta* (king) of the Gara, at Eda (Idah), far down the Niger. The tribute was paid in slaves, and every family head had annually to contribute one male member of his house. These slaves, as tradition has it, were always sister's sons. It so happened that the son of the *Atta* Gara came hunting to Nku in Nupe country. Here he met the daughter of the chief of Nku, a young widow, fell in love with her and lived with her for some time. When the death of his father recalled him to his country, to succeed to the throne of the Gara, this woman was pregnant. He left her a charm and a ring to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede. Then the old chief of Nku died, his son became chief, and when Tsoede was 30 years of age the new chief sent him, as his sister's son, as slave to Eda. The *Atta* Gara recognized his son in the new slave by the charm and ring which he was wearing, and kept him near his person, treating him almost like his legitimate sons. Tsoede stayed for thirty years at his father's court. Once the king fell victim to a mysterious illness which nobody could cure. The court diviner prophesied that only a fruit from a very high oil-palm outside the town, plucked by one man, would cure the king. All his legitimate sons tried, in vain, to obtain the precious fruit. Finally Tsoede made the attempt, and succeeded. But in this attempt he cut his lip so badly that he looked almost like a man born with a split lip. From this time—and this still holds true to-day—all hare-lipped boys born in Nupe are named Edegi. Tsoede's achievement, which made him still more beloved by his father and honoured by the court, evoked the jealousy of his half-brothers. Thus, when the *Atta* felt his death coming he advised his son to flee, and to return to his own country the rule of which he bestowed on him as a parting gift. He assisted him in his flight, he gave him riches of all kinds and bestowed on him various insignia of kingship: a bronze canoe 'as only kings have', manned with twelve Nupe slaves; the bronze *kakati*, the long trumpets which are still the insignia of kings in the whole of Northern Nigeria; state drums hung with brass bells; and the heavy iron chains and fetters which, endowed with strong magic, have become the emblems of the king's judicial power, and are known to-day as *egbā Tsoede*, Chain of Tsoede.[2]

Now comes the story of Tsoede's adventurous flight from Eda, travel-

[1] See Appendix III. There exist several versions of the myth. I am giving here the version which I learned from the *Etsu* of Patigi, the last living descendant of the Tsoede dynasty.

[2] The villages where these chains are found (all lying in the Niger valley) were entrusted with the special mission of acting as the 'King's Hangmen'. I have described this organization in *Man*, 1935, 143. Two places on the Niger, Tada and Jebba Island, possess sacred bronze figures which, like the chains, are linked with the tradition and worship of Tsoede. According to some versions of the Tsoede myth they too were a gift from the *Atta* to the departing Tsoede; the *Etsu* of Patigi, my informant for the version given here, denied this.

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173 ling up-river, hotly pursued by his half-brothers and their men. On the way he is helped by two men, whom he later rewards by making them chief and second-in-command of the Kyedye tribe. When he reaches the Kaduna river he turns into a creek called Ega, and lies here in hiding till his pursuers, tired of their fruitless search, return to Eda. Tsoede and his men leave the canoe and sink it in the river; the people of Ega still perform an annual sacrifice on the spot, where, as the tradition has it, Tsoede's canoe was sunk, and at these ceremonies they are able, you are told, to see the bright bronze of the canoe glitter in the water. Tsoede then went to Nupeko, a village near-by, killed the chief, and made himself chief of the place. He conquered Nku, the town of his maternal uncle, made himself the ruler of all Beni (or Nupe—all informants are vague on this point), and assumed the title *Etsu*, king. He made the twelve men who had accompanied him from Eda the chiefs of the twelve towns of Beni and bestowed on them the sacred insignia of chieftainship, brass bangles and magic chains. The present chiefs of Beni (as far as their 'towns' still survive) claim descent from these twelve men, and still treasure bangles or chains as insignia of chieftainship. Tsoede carried out big and victorious wars against many tribes and kingdoms, conquering in the south the countries of Yagba, Bunu (two sections of the Yoruba), Kakanda, as far as Akoko, and in the north the countries of Ebe, Kamberi, and Kamuku. He resided first in Nupeko, which name means 'Great Nupe', for eight years, and when Nupeko grew too small, he built the new capital of Gbara, on the Kaduna, which was to remain the *ẹ̀tsi 'tsu*, the King's Town, till the Fulani conquest. At that time his residence is said to have counted 5,555 horses, so many in fact, that there was no room for them in Gbara, and one of Tsoede's sons, Abdu, who was in charge of the horses, crossed the Kaduna and founded on the opposite bank a place which is still known by the name of Dokomba, 'Horse Place'.

Apart from the royal insignia and emblems of magic Tsoede is said to have brought to Nupe from Eda certain crafts and techniques hitherto unknown in the country. He brought with him blacksmiths and brassmiths who taught the crude blacksmiths of Nupe their more advanced technique; the canoe-men who came with him imported into Nupe the craft of building large canoes of which the Nupe are said to have been ignorant at that time. Tsoede is also believed by some to have introduced human sacrifices—there is a gruesome story of the first sacrifice, the victim of which was Tsoede's mother's brother—and to have established first the custom of bride-price.

We can to some extent ascertain what there is of historical truth in this tradition. Certain indirect evidence tends to confirm the main facts of the Tsoede tradition. The alien, southern provenance of some of the cultural goods, which in the tradition are linked with Idah and the coming of Tsoede, seems fairly certain. Some at least of the sacred bronze figures in Tada and Jebba, cast in *cire perdue*, a technique unknown in Nupe and the north, bear the stamp of the culture which we are wont to associate with Benin—and Benin, as we know, has for a long period been the political overlord of Idah; the same is true of the beautifully cast brass

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bells—among them the square-shaped bells typical of Benin work—on the state drums found all along the Niger. The heavy iron chains and fetters, on the other hand, are most probably of Portuguese origin; they may have been brought in by slave-traders from the coast and have found their way up the river into the hinterland—the home of these precious trading goods.[1] Even the approximate date of the immigration of Tsoede and his band can be fixed with some accuracy. For on this point all the various genealogies of Nupe kings, obtained from quite different sources, tally. Giving the years of reign of every Nupe king, back to Tsoede, they all place the life of Tsoede in the same period, the early fifteenth century. It is interesting to note that the royal genealogies in two great neighbouring kingdoms, Yoruba and Ewe (in Togoland), also trace back the history of their royal ancestors to the same period, about 1400.[2] We may not be mistaken therefore in assuming that the beginning of the fifteenth century marks the end of a big wave of immigration which eventually led to the firm establishment of a number of new West African societies—kingdoms, in our three instances. For Nupe we can go farther than this. The same period saw the first contact of the Guinea Coast with Europe. In 1498 the Portuguese established themselves in Benin. But at that time they found a Benin already on the verge of collapse, the once powerful kingdom weakened and in obvious disintegration. Idah, once tributary to Benin, and master over Nupe as of many other dependencies, must have weakened with it. The myth of Tsoede's delivery of Nupe from the yoke of Idah may well contain a kernel of historical truth (whatever form the events may have taken in reality); the foundation of an independent Nupe kingdom may have been one of the historical results of the disintegration of Benin and its vassal states. The ancient contact of Idah and Nupe as well as the former sovereignty of Idah, are undoubtedly historical. The tradition of Tsoede is as well known in Idah as in Nupe. And when some years ago the *Atta* of Idah came to Bida—he was keen to visit that country of which the tradition of his tribe had so much to tell—a significant political imbroglio threatened the meeting of the Nigerian potentates. It arose from a question of precedence; the Idah man insisted on being given a higher seat than the *Etsu* Nupe, basing his claim on the unforgotten historical fact of Nupe's ancient vassalship to Idah.

This bare framework of facts—if facts they are—has absorbed many other features, legends, traditions, embellishments; which of them contain any historical truth it is impossible to say. But we are not concerned here to determine what is and what is not historical truth in the rich cycle of traditions round the figure of Tsoede. The myth as it stands, and as it is treasured by the people of Nupe, is to us a sufficiently significant social reality. It represents the typical 'mythical charter' of

[1] Exactly the same chains and irons have been found on the Gold Coast; small models of these fetters, of brass, iron, or gold, are sold as charms all down the river and the creeks of Southern Nigeria. A common origin suggests itself forcibly.

[2] See Bishop Johnson, *History of the Yoruba*, and D. Westermann (personal information).

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173 the kingdom, and its common knowledge constitutes the first and foremost of these common beliefs and forms of cultural 'commonness' which supply the background of political unity. I have found the consciousness of this tradition developed most strongly in the river area and among the Beni, that is, in the area that marks what I have called the 'core' of the expanding kingdom. It is totally absent to-day, and most probably has always been absent, among the Dibo, who have never formed part of the old kingdom, and among some of the Nupe-ized groups (such as the 'Gbari slaves') which, absorbed into Nupe in more recent times, have remained culturally 'Outside Peoples'. The distribution of the 'mythical charter' of Nupe kingdom and the boundaries of the kingdom itself coincide.

To go on with the tradition of Tsoede. For sixty years he reigned in Gbara; he died, 120 years old, on one of his military expeditions to the north, near Gbagede. Some of his belongings, two stirrups and his sword, are still kept as almost sacred treasure by the people of Gbagede (who are Kamberi, not Nupe). At the time of Tsoede's death the kingdom of Nupe was expanding towards the north, and his four sons who succeeded him as kings of Nupe, one after the other, are said to have founded Mokwa, in the north-west corner of Nupe, as their temporary capital. Another of his descendants, Abdu Waliyi, founded the capital Jima, on the Kaduna opposite Gbara.[1] The fifteenth king after Tsoede, Jibiri, who reigned according to Nupe genealogies about 1770, was the first Nupe king to become Mohammedan. He was deposed by his son and died in exile, in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen. Under *Etsu* Ma'azû, the nineteenth king of Nupe, Nupe kingdom reached its greatest power. During his reign, about 1810, Mallam Dendo, also called Manko, 'Great Mallam', a Fulani from Kebbi who was destined to change the whole fate of Nupe kingdom, is said to have first appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner, and seller of charms. With *Etsu* Ma'azû we also reach, for the first time, in this account, the plane of 'objective history'; his death is recorded by one of the first European visitors to Nupe as having occurred in 1818.[2]

THE FULANI CONQUEST

175 [814] We enter now a period of Nupe history which is illuminated by the light of 'real' history. It is described with many details in the written records of Nupe court historians, the earliest of whom was a certain Abduramani, a Mohammedan scholar who seems to have lived in Rabá in the early days of Fulani rule. It was during this period, too, that European travellers first penetrated into Nupe.[3]

[1] In addition to the historical capitals of the kingdom, Gbara, Mokwa, Jima, and finally Rabá (see below), the Nupe records also mention certain other places at which the Nupe kings are said to have resided temporarily at various times, viz. Etsú, Jengi, and Yeti.

[2] Journal of Rev. J. F. Schoen and Samuel Crowther, *Expedition up the Niger*, 1842, p. 191.

[3] I owe to the kindness of the Administration the opportunity of having been able to consult unpublished Government records, compiled by the first officers who were serving in this area; I must acknowledge specially the very complete 'Notes on Nupe History', by Major Burdon (1902).

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especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny. The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*, who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabe', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

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KYEDYE sub-tribe:

EBAGI sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks: very mixed. Have adopted Bida and Kutigi marks.

BASSA NGE sub-tribe:
Traditional marks:

Modern marks:

and also Bida marks.

KAKANDA tribe:
Modern marks: identical with Bida marks.

APPENDIX III

HISTORICAL CHART OF NUPE RULERS

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A.D.	
1463?	Birth of Tsoede.
1493	Tsoede taken as slave to Iddah.
1523	Tsoede's flight from Iddah.
1531	Tsoede established himself as king of Nupe in Nupeko.
1591	Tsoede's death.
1591–1600	*Etsu* Shaba.
1600–25	*Etsu* Zavunla.
1625–70	*Etsu* Jigba.
1670–9	*Etsu* Mamma Wari.
1679–1700	*Etsu* Abdu Waliyi, foundation of the capital Jima.
1700–9	*Etsu* Alyu.
1710–13	*Etsu* Ganamace or Saci.
1713–17	*Etsu* Ibrahim.
1717–21	*Etsu* Idirisu.
1721–42	*Etsu* Tsado.
1742–6	*Etsu* Abubakari Kolo.
1746–59	*Etsu* Jibiri, the first Mohammedan king of Nupe. He was driven from his kingdom after thirteen years' reign. Died in exile in Kutigi, where his grave can still be seen.
1759–67	*Etsu* Ma'azû's first reign. Power of Jima at its height. He resigned the throne and left Nupe to live in Yauri.
1767–77	*Etsu* Majiya I.

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1777–8	*Etsu* Ilyasu. He is said to have disappeared suddenly.
1778–95	*Etsu* Ma'azû's second reign, after having been requested by the people to return to Nupe. Mallam Dendo (Manko), the Fulani emissary, appeared in Nupe.
1795	*Etsu* Alikolo Tankari. Reigned only for eight months, and was deposed by the people.
1795–6	*Etsu* Mamma. Foundation of the capital Rabá. Division of the kingdom.
1796–1805	*Etsu* Jimada, reigning at Jima. War with Majiya II. Jimada was killed in battle at Jengi (Ragada?).
1796–1810	*Etsu* Majiya II, reigning at Rabá.
1806	Majiya's war against the Fulani. Siege of Ilorin and defeat of Nupe armies.
1810?	The Fulani, supported by Idirisu, son of Jimada, conquered Rabá. Majiya fled to Zuguma. Idirisu (Yisa) installed as shadow-king of Nupe in Adama Lelu, near Eggã, by Fulani.
1810(13)–30	*Etsu* Idirisu (Yisa), reigning at Adama Lelu.
1830	Idirisu's rebellion against the Fulani. He was killed in the battle. Mallam Dendo recalled Majiya from his exile and made him shadow-king of Nupe in Zuguma.
1830–4	*Etsu* Majiya's second reign, in Zuguma.
1831	Death of Mallam Dendo.
1836	Rebellion and death of Tsado, Majiya's son. Usman Zaki, son of Mallam Dendo, was crowned first Fulani *Etsu* of Nupe.
1838	First rebellion of Masaba, Mallam Dendo's youngest son, against his brother. Established himself as rival king of Nupe in Lade.
1841	Masaba's second rebellion. Usman Zaki resigned the throne.
1847	Rebellion of the Hausa general Umar Bahaushe against his overlords. Masaba fled to Ilorin.
1850	Fall of Bida and defeat of Umar Bahaushe by Fulani armies under Umaru Majigi. Usman Zaki's second reign.

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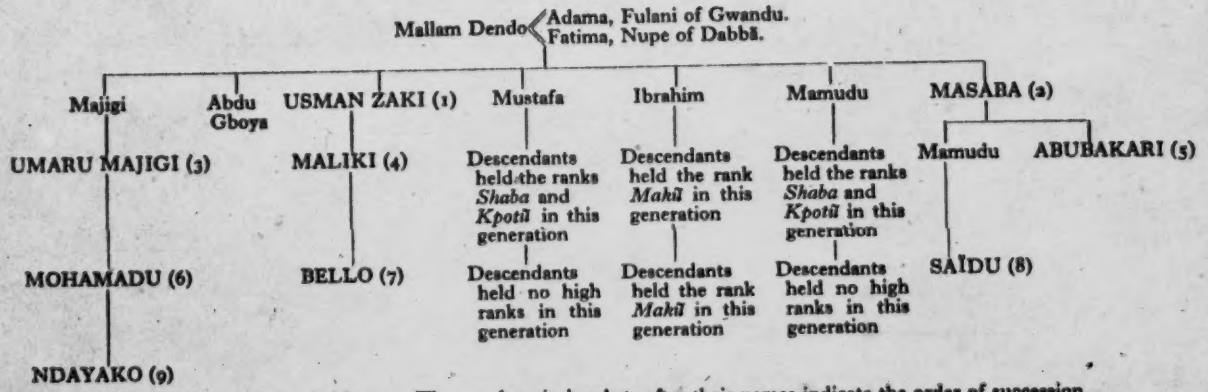
[p.482]

APPENDIX IV

GENEALOGY OF THE FULANI EMIRS OF NUPE



EMIRS' names in capital letters. The numbers in brackets after their names indicate the order of succession.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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VIII

ISLAM IN NUPE

I. THE CONVERSION TO ISLAM

If the pagan religions surrounding Nupe lack the features essential to complete conversion, Islam has them all. It is a proselytizing and super-national creed; it is embodied in a church; it provides for the requisite tuition and for special procedures of admission; also, the conversion to the new, non-tribal, religion went together with a significant restructuring of the society so converted.

The historical background of the Islamization of Nupe is fairly clear. According to Nupe tradition, the fifteenth king after the mythical Tsoede, Jibiri, who reigned about 1770, was the first to adopt Islam. But the names of even earlier rulers seem to indicate Mohammedan influence (Abdu Waliyi, 1679–1700, Ibrahim, 1713–17, Abubakari Kolo, 1742–6). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, under Etsu Ma'azū, the impact of Islam had gained both in strength and purpose. It was then that Mallam Dendo came to Nupe as an emissary of the Fulani Emir of Gwando, entrusted with the double task of spreading Islam and of paving the way for the Fulani conquest, which was itself a phase in the Holy War that had been raised in the north of Nigeria. Even before Mallam Dendo's arrival, apparently, it had become customary to include mallams among the court officials of the Nupe kings, as diviners, chaplains, and advisers on matters spiritual and secular. Dendo filled this role with great efficiency, so great that he soon became the actual ruler of the kingdom. Aided by other mallams and agents of the new regime, and by a mercenary army officered by Mohammedans, he effected the overthrow of the old dynasty and turned Nupe kingdom into a vassal state of the Fulani Empire whose supreme head, the Emir of Sokoto, styled himself *Sarkin Muslmi*—'King of the Moslems'. From then onwards, Islam became the official religion, not only of royalty, but of the state, spreading through all the channels of bureaucracy, to the craft guilds and merchants, and along the main trade routes of the country. Though its firmest hold is still upon the capital it has

TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN AND HISTORY[1]

173 The Nupe kingdom was, according to their own traditions, founded by the culture hero Tsoede or Edegi, born, according to the genealogies of the Nupe kings, early in the 15th century when the Nupe were grouped in various small chieftainships subject to the *Ata* of Igala at Idah, to whom an annual tribute of slaves, traditionally sisters' sons, had to be paid. The son of the *Ata* at this time went hunting in Nupe country, fell in love with a chief's daughter, lived with her for some time, and she became pregnant. On the death of his father the son returned to Idah to succeed but he left a chain and a ring with the woman to give to their child when it was born. This child was Tsoede, who, when he was 30 years old, was sent to Idah by his mother's brother as part of the slave tribute. He enjoyed considerable favour and success at his father's court but was eventually forced to flee because of the jealousy of his half-brothers. He travelled upstream in a bronze canoe to his own country and after many adventures established himself as king of the Nupe.

Tsoede is held to have introduced the arts of iron and brass working and the practice of human sacrifices. He died at the reputed age of 120, on one of his military expeditions to the north in which direction the Nupe kingdom was then expanding. Some of his belongings, two stirrups and a sword, are still treasured by the people of Gbagede, who are not Nupe but Kamberi.[2]

175 The first Nupe king to become a Moslem is thought to have reigned about 1770. The Nupe kingdom reached the height of its power during the periods when the *Etsu* Ma'azun was on the throne (1759–67 and 1778–95).

After the Fulani conquered the Hausa states of Northern Nigeria in the Jihad of 1805, the Nupe came under the domination of the dynasty of the Emir of Gwandu. About 1810 Mallam Dendo, a Fulani from Kebbi, who was to play an important part in its history, appeared in Nupe country as an itinerant preacher, diviner, and charm seller. He gathered around him a following of cattle Fulani, Hausa and Fulani mercenaries, merchants and priests. Taking advantage of the dissensions which broke out after *Etsu* Ma'azun's death, he established himself as a military leader. The Nupe kingdom was at this time split into two halves, with *Etsu* Jimada ruling at Gbara, the ancient capital, and *Etsu* Maija at the newly built capital of Raba on the Niger. Maija gained the support of Mallam Dendo and his followers and attacked *Etsu* Jimada, routing his forces and killing him. Eventually, however, fearing that Mallam Dendo might become a dangerous rival, he drove him from his territory across the Niger into the Yoruba country of Ilorin, and later made war against him and the ruling Fulani in Ilorin. Here Maija was defeated and driven back into the interior of Nupe country, leaving Raba open to Mallam Dendo who established himself there as ruler over the Nupe.

After his death in 1833 Dendo's second son Usman Zaki succeeded him and the old Nupe dynasty, exiled to Zugurma, abandoned all claim to the rulership. For some 10 years there were constant intrigues and quarrels among the sons of Mallam Dendo, and wars against other tribes. Usman Zaki renounced the throne in 1841 but reoccupied it in 1850. Bida then became the centre of the new kingdom in a period of comparative peace.

Between 1870 and 1890 the Niger Company established trading posts along the Niger. They, and later the Government of Nigeria, detached outlying portions of the kingdom. The Yagba and Bunu Yoruba; Gbari, Basa, and Kakanda became independent in 1900–05; the territories on the south and west banks of the Niger were taken away and given to the Emirs of Ilorin, Shonga, Lafiagi, and Pategi; the northern Nupe territories came under the Emir of Kontagora, and only Bida Division remained of the former Nupe kingdom. As a result of this fragmentation there are now groups of Nupe in areas under non-Nupe chiefs.

[1] For fuller accounts of Nupe history see Temple, 1919, pp. 334–6; Nadel, 1942, pp. 72–86; Harmon-Hodge, 1939, pp. 102–10.

[2] According to Nadel. But Mathews (MS, 1936) describes them as "pagan Nupe."

NUPE.

AUTHORITIES:

Mr. T. A. G. Budgen. Mr. E. C. Duff.
Mr. E. G. M. Dupigny.

[3] [7] The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities ● 173 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name [30] of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new 197 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neighbouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage: for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synonymously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group, and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

trading goods, or till they have found another 'passenger' (in native phraseology) to engage them for a profitable return journey.

Here we grasp the significance of this productive system for the organization of settlement in Kede country. The long canoe expeditions necessitate fixed stopping and resting places, where the canoemen must be sure to find shelter and food and opportunity to refit their craft. The 'termini' of their river routes more specially will tend to become at least seasonal 'colonies' of Kede. The stopping and waiting places will naturally be chosen in accordance with commercial considerations. And, finally, there must be some system of political protection, which could ensure the safety (speaking of pre-British times) of these far-flung routes, the stopping places with their valuable stores, and the seasonal or permanent trading posts:[1] trading posts which, of necessity, tend to become political colonies—this gives us the formula of Kede settlement.

IV. Settlement

We are fortunate in possessing data which allow us to trace in detail the history of settlement and population movement in Kede country. Our data are derived only partly from oral tradition. The history of Kede settlement reaches into the well-documented era of Nigerian exploration and British occupation; its last phases are happening under our very eyes. In addition to these historical records, we possess evidence of a different kind, which, indirectly, contributes considerably to our understanding of population movement in Kede country: it lies, as we shall see, in the lay-out and organization of the present-day Kede settlements themselves.

According to Kede tradition, their tribal home was near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, near Muregi, which, some time later, became their political capital. From there they are said to have extended their settlements, and rule at the same time, gradually over the river banks towards the north and the south

[1] A case in point is the uninhabited right bank of the Niger above Jebba, where constant raids by inland tribes (from Borgu) made settlement impossible. The left bank, on the other hand, could be adequately protected, and here the Kede established a settlement at Buka (it was later moved to Jebba). In the south, Kede canoes did not travel beyond Eggan in pre-British days. The river south of Eggan was the domain of the Kakanda, a warlike riverain tribe of non-Nupe stock, which refused Kede canoes admittance into their area. Trade goods for the south had to be trans-shipped at Eggan to Kakanda canoes.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

till their villages covered the Niger Valley between Eggan and Jebba. At the time when the first European travellers appeared in Nupe country, we find the Kede already firmly entrenched in this part of the Niger Valley. Now, of the ten main villages of the Kede which exist to-day only one represents an independent, purely Kede settlement—the Kede capital, Muregi. It is a well-built village, with solid houses of sun-dried mud bricks, each compound walled in in Nupe fashion, with a big mosque and an imposing chief's house. It is, as I have said, a pure Kede town, a town inhabited entirely by the 'ruling race'—'*u de talakazi a*', say the Kede ('it contains no poor'—meaning persons belonging to the subject groups). All other Kede settlements, without exception, are built on or near the site of a village of 'original inhabitants'. In most cases the Kede settlement occupies the river bank itself, and the 'native' village the stretch of country immediately behind; in a few cases we find the Kede settlements on an island off the bank occupied by the 'native' village or on the opposite side of the river. The result is something like a twin-village, half 'native' and half Kede. The scene of Kede tradition, a tribal home and emigrant settlements, seems indeed visible in the present-day organization of Kede settlement, with its one all-Kede town and its many 'twin-villages' along the river valley.

The more recent history of Kede settlement remains true to this picture of a gradual territorial expansion. We know that towards the end of last century the Kede settled for the first time on the Kaduna River. Later, under the Royal Niger Company, the Kede were encouraged to extend their settlements still farther on Niger and Kaduna. It is easy to trace these new settlements, which were founded near the European trading posts and other places which had similarly gained commercial importance. Only some thirty years ago the Kede founded their latest 'colony'—on Jebba Island.

The villages differ greatly in appearance: some villages boast solidly built permanent houses, while others consist largely of more flimsy buildings, grass-walled huts, suggestive of temporary occupation rather than permanent settlements. The habitations of the Kede reflect the flexible, mobile nature of their system of settlement. The degree of permanence attempted in the buildings at the same time betrays the age of the settlement as well as its (past or present) importance as an economic or

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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Kede

The various Kede groups are thus all related, not only, rather vaguely, by common descent, being all emigrants of common stock, but also very concretely, by repeated inter-marriage. Personal contact between fellow tribesmen, friends, and relations among the Kede, whatever the distance of their habitations, is maintained by occasional visits, and revived regularly every trading season, when the Kede canoes travel from place to place. Finally, the solidarity of the Kede community is strengthened periodically, when new groups of immigrants come out from 'home' to join fellow tribesmen who have emigrated earlier in their 'colony'.

Tradition and Mythology. The Kede share their traditions with their mother tribe, and, like the Nupe, trace their origin back to the mythical Tsoede or Edegi, of whom we have heard already (see p. 175). This Tsoede is said to have been a Nupe man who lived about 1400, and who was sent as slave to Idah, to which country Nupe was tributary at that time. He won the favour of the King of Idah, so much so that he evoked the jealousy of the sons of the king, and eventually had to flee the country. He set out in a bronze canoe, loaded with gifts from the king and manned by other Nupe slaves, to return to his country and to make himself king there, the rule of Nupe having been the King of Idah's parting gift to his favourite. On his flight to Nupe, Tsoede was helped by two men whom he met on the river—one sitting on a stone in midstream (*kuta*),[1] and one fishing with a fish trap (*ekpā*). When Tsoede established himself as King of Nupe he rewarded these two men by making them chief over the whole river and its tribes (*Kuta*), and a high rank-holder in the new river State (*Ekpā*), respectively.[2] These men were the ancestors of the present Kede, and the first to exercise the 'Rule over the Water', which has remained in the possession of the Kede since.

It clearly does not come within the compass of the present study to examine how far these legendary data might contain a kernel of historical truth. Their importance to us lies rather in the sociological significance of the 'truth' which they announce—that

[1] *Kuta*, stone, seems to be an old form of Nupe; it occurs in two obsolete Nupe dialects, and also in Gbari, a related language. The modern Nupe word for stone is *takū* (the syllables of *kuta* reversed).

[2] The Nupe are very fond of such puns. There exists another version of this legend which derives the title *Kuta* from the fact that the man on the stone was wearing two gowns 'on top of each other'—in Nupe, *ku ta doji*.

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Kede

is, in the influence upon actual social life which the belief in this 'truth' entails. The Kede tradition of origin, as we have seen, concerns itself above all with the beginnings of the political history of the tribe. In the fashion of such myths of origin, it anchors the existing system in a dim past, which, by its very remoteness and its supernatural and sacred associations, endows the present with an immensely convincing validity. The Kede tradition of origin ranges its strongest spiritual support behind what we now recognize to be the two fundamental features of their political system: the fact that the extent of Kede rule is defined on the basis of locality, and not tribe, and the fact that, within the larger political unit of Nupe kingdom, the Kede claim a semi-autonomous position. Let me emphasize that the knowledge of this tradition is not limited to the Kede, but is common to all Nupe sections, and among them the various *kintsoʒi* groups. The common possession of the myth represents a spiritual link of utmost importance: for with the myth the subjects of the Kede also accept the system which it is meant to guarantee—the overlordship of the Kede.

Religion. As I have mentioned, the Kede are to-day Mohammedans—very eager Mohammedans, in fact. In many settlements you will find *mallams* teaching the Koran to boys and adults, often pupils who are able to attend the classes only when their travels happen to take them to this place and allow them a short sojourn. The *kintsoʒi*, on the other hand, are still largely pagans. Moreover, against the solid religious unity of the Kede, the *kintsoʒi* show a certain diversity of religious rites and beliefs, which reflects the composite nature of this group.[1] However, there exist two rituals, both essentially river rituals, which are common to all the semi-riverain groups, and a third ritual, linked with the memory of Tsoede, which exists in all the larger riverain (and partly also inland) villages of Nupe. The first of these rituals is the *Nddduma* (the Nupe name for the River Niger), an annual sacrifice to the spirits of the river, performed in all the different river villages

[1] We cannot say what the religious situation in the river valley has been in the earlier periods of Nupe history. The probability is that the Kede, as most Nupe sub-tribes, possessed certain special rites and beliefs, which were not shared by the other tribal groups. The characteristic difference between Kede and *kintsoʒi* to-day, between a solid religious unit on one side and a heterogeneous religious group on the other, would thus have been equally marked in the pre-Islamic era.

8: Walker G-5 (ca. 1933) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52

696 and Wangwa claim to have done so. They state the chains were wound several times round the neck of the victim and the ends drawn tight till he was strangled.

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FIG. 14.

15. Besides the chains there were three pairs of manacles as in fig. 14, staple and neck collar.

16. Edegi's expedition or flight, whichever the case may be, is a well-known historical fact and, in the "Notes on the Tribes, "Provinces, Emirates and States of the North-"ern Provinces of Nigeria," compiled by Mrs. Temple, it is said to have taken place about 1505. A study of this curiously assorted group of relics will hardly assist us in coming to definite conclusions about the nature of this incident or in understanding how Edegi came to found the Nupé state. But it provides interesting material for speculation.

S. W. WALKER.

[p. 172]

9: Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

MAN

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

Africa: West. With Plate I-J. Nadel.

131 **The King's Hangman: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

143 Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggā in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.'

I.

778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the [782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sūlati, [103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads [532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *égbā Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

● 173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Edc*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

173 the supremacy of Idah, and established the independent Nupe kingdom which is eventually to become one of the most powerful native states in Nigeria.[2]

II.

778 The chain is the sacred relic of all *ledu* villages. It protects the village from sickness, and gives
695 fertility to the women. But it has yet another, more special, meaning. It is also called *'ti dzana*,
696 the 'head of Dzana,' and the story goes that Tsoede inaugurated the chain by beheading his own maternal uncle, Dzana, and placing head and chain together on the wooden tray as a permanent symbol for his power over life and death. From that day the chain remained an instrument of execution, and the villages which possess it are the ones to perform the execution; they are the 'king's hangmen.'[3] The jurisdiction over grave crimes lay in the hands of the king. They were actually termed *leiši nyá 'tsu*, 'crimes of the king.' But whenever such a grave crime was committed, the king had to summon the help of the *ledu*. The criminal was brought to the king's residence first. The king would then try the case, invoke the sacred ordeal, and pass the sentence. Then his own men would bring the criminal to the place of the execution, as a rule the *ledu* village situated nearest to the place of the crime. There men from the village put the criminal in irons, and led him into the bush where nobody could see him, tied the sacred chain round his neck, and strangled him. Finally they buried the corpse in the bush, and returned to their village, announcing to the king's messenger that 'everything had been done.'

681 The crimes which were regarded as such 'king's crimes' were: theft during the night, and big theft (*e.g.*, of cattle, or a horse); murder; and the crime of *lèse majesté*. In this case the *ledu* did not kill the criminal, but only flogged him severely, and drove him out of the territory of Nupe. In case the criminal was a man of high rank, perhaps of the ruling family, only the head towns, Jebba or Tada, could perform the execution.

693 Three men were the executioners in every village, and one amongst them was invariably the *ndáce*, the 'father of the shooting,'-*i.e.*, the head of the hunter guild. There is a deep meaning in this. For a hunter is not only a man trained in hunting and killing, but he also possesses that essential magic which, after the act of killing, can expiate the deed, and propitiate the spirit of the dead. And through this element of propitiatory magic the killing of the guilty criminal is distinguished from all other killing. It ceases to be mere inflicting of death. It gains the dignity of a sacred office, and an almost ritual act.

693 Whether such beliefs went deeper than this: whether there existed a general superstition
767 which made the people shrink from the idea of inflicting death on natives of their own village, and thus made them entrust this uncanny work to people from other places, or to people protected by special magic, I dare not decide. There certainly exists still to-day a strong repugnance against
[761] having to do with all matters concerning death, and in particular unnatural death. Even the ordinary burial is carried out in secret, by one special family in every village which alone possesses the magical knowledge of burying the dead. But should a person be killed by lightning, or found murdered, no native of the village would come near the dead, but people from another village (or perhaps a village known for its special magic) would be called to perform this mysteriously perilous
693 work. Yet, on the other hand, I have positive evidence that in certain places of Nupe, outside the

[174] [2] A few words only about the possible historical basis of this tradition. According to the existing, very detailed, genealogies of the Nupe kings, Tsoede's life fell into the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time Idah is said to have been, since long, under the supremacy of Benin. Now the big bronze figures at Jebba and Tada are cast in *cire perdue*, the same technic as the famous Benin bronzes—and a technic which does not exist, at least not in the same perfection, in Nupe country to-day. The chains and irons, finally, are evidently of European origin. They must have been brought into Nigeria by the Portuguese who, as we know, had established close contact, and an extended slave trade, with the king of Benin by the end of the fifteenth century. From Benin the bronze figures and chains might have reached Idah, and eventually Nupe, by the natural highway for trade and traffic, the Niger.—About the bronze figures see also Mak, 1931, 261, and 1934, 193.

[3] The *ledu* are also known by the name *dogari nya Tsoede*, lit. the policemen of Tsoede. *Dogari*, however, is a Hausa word, which might have been adopted more recently. In one or two places I actually found an older term still remembered: *tste-cigbecí*, lit. the executioner-medicineman. This term evidently refers to the magical element connected with this office.

10: Hassan & Shuaibu I-4, 5 (ca. 1940)1952
MS12 Hausa MS12
Abuja
Nupe FF52

Musulmi[1], Bello of Sokoto, son of Osman dan Fodio, writes in his book 'In Fakul Maisuri':— H 173

> "Strange things have happened in the history of the seven Hausa States, and the most strange of these is the extent of the possessions which God gave to Aminatu, daughter of the ruler of Zazzau. She waged war in the Hausa lands and took them all, so that the men of Katsina and the men of Kano brought her tribute. She made war in Bauchi and against the other towns of the south and of the west, so that her possessions stretched down to the shores of the [illegible]."

Aminatu died at Attagara, which is the town now called Idah on the banks of the Niger. From her dates the predominance of the people of Zazzau who held wide dominion; from the Kwarrarafa to the Nufe country many districts came under her control. The King of Nufe sent her forty eunuchs and ten thousand kolanuts, neither of which had been seen in the Hausa lands before, and in her time came the first trade from the south, and she held sway for thirty-four years. N [173]

This predominance of Zazzau came to an end in 1734 when the Beriberi of Bornu made war on all the Hausa states. It was from this time that the people of Zaria began to pay tribute to Bornu, and for this reason that henceforward the Kings of Zazzau were always installed by a representative of the ruler of Bornu, the Magajin Malam[2]; there was also an Emissary of the ruler of Bornu, called the Kachalla, sent to live at the court of the King of Zazzau. But after this there was no great war in Zaria until the appearance of the Fulani in their Holy War.

HOW THE KING OF ZAZZAU, MUHAMMAN MAKAU, CAME TO ZUBA.

H 175

In the year 1804, the Shehu Osman dan Fodio made war on the King of Gobir; and this was the first Holy War of the Fulani which they waged for six years against the Hausa States. Straightway, a certain Malam named Musa, who was a teacher of the strict Faith in the land of Zazzau, called together his fellow Fulani and went to the Shehu at Gobir, and from him received a Flag of Conquest; then he, with Yamusa, a Fulani of Bornu, and three hundred and thirty-three men came down to war against Zaria.

They fell upon the King of Zazzau, Muhamman Makau, on Saturday the tenth day of the month of Zulhaji in the year 1804 whilst he was at the prayer-ground of Idi outside the town. Though Makau had many men with him, he was defeated, for they could not get back inside the town to arm, and he was forced to flee. That is

[1] "Head of the Moslems" or "Commander of the Faithful" in Nigeria.

[2] See p. 13.